with satellite system and open mini media centres in the State;

(d) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(e) by when the State is likely to be linked by Satellite and mini media centres opened in Madhya Pradesh?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (KUMARI GIRIJA VYAS): (a) to (e) The relevant information relating to various media units of this Ministry is given below:

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU

The Press Information Bureau envisages to revive its offices at Jabalpur and Raipur in Madhya Pradesh during the VIII Plan period. Besides, Bureau's Regional Office at Bhopal and Branch Office at Indore are proposed to be linked through satellite link of National Informatics Centre (NIC). Satellite based communication set-up has already been started in Bhopal and is being tested. Regular traffic will commence in due course. Similarly, for the office at Indore, necessary computer hardware has been procured and site preparation is, at present, under way. After preparation of site and installation of computer equipment it will be connected to the District Centre of the NIC from where it will be further connected to PIB headquarters through satellite.

It is also envisaged to open Mini Media Centres at all the Branch Offices of the Bureau including those in Madhya Pradesh during the VIII Plan Period.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Insofar as All India Radio and Doordarshan are concerned, there are a number of on-going schemes for expanding the existing All India Radio and Doordarshan facilities in the State. The details are indicated below:—

ALL INDIA RADIO

(i) Three new Radio Stations with 2x3 KW FM transmitters at Guna, Balaghat and Sagar.

(ii) Upgradation of the power of the existing 2 nos. of 1 KW MW Transmitters and 10 KW SW Transmitters at Bhopal to 10 KW MW, 3 KW FM and 50 KW SW respectively.

DOORDARSHAN

(i) Fullfledged TV Studio Centre at Bhopal and a Programme Generation Facility (PGF) Centre at Raipur.

(ii) One high power (10 KW) TV transmitter at Jabalpur.

(iii) 2 low power TV transmitters one each at Datia and Jaora.

(iv) 2 very low power TV transmitters one each at Kukadeshwar and Parasia.

It is envisaged to set up high power TV transmitters in replacement of the existing low power TV transmitters at Guna and Ambikapur subject to availability of resources and *inter-se* priorities.

It is also envisaged to link all high power/low power TV transmitters in the State with Doordarshan Kendra, Bhopal *via* satellite mode of linkage for which a satellite uplink earth station is at an advanced stage of implecentation. The introduction of regional TV service will, however, depend upon the availability of adequate space segment capacity.

Opening of captive coal mines

*129. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has decided to allow coal consuming industries to open captive coal mines; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that the C.C.E.A., has also decided to allow private sector to set up coal washeries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) and (b) The Government have decided to allow private sector participation in coal mining operations in virgin areas for the purpose of captive consumption for power generation and other end uses to be notified, as well as to set up coal washeries.

A Bill to amend the Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 in order to implement the above decision of the Government is introduced in Parliament.

*130. [*Transferred to the 28th July, 1992*].

SAARC Trade Pact

*131. DR. SANJAYA SINH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the 'Times of India', dated June 26, 1992, captioned "Move for SAARC Trade Pact runs into trouble" to the effect that exercise to liberalise trade between members of the SAARC has run into a rough patch;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) At the Committee on Economic Cooperation (CEC) held in Colombo during June 22-23, there were some initial differences on the validity of a prior recommendation by an Inter Governmental Group (IGG) to set up a SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) in three years. These were ironed out with an understanding to regard the three year period as indicative in nature, aimed at expediting the process of economic cooperation among the member States. Both the IGG and CEC reports were approved by the SAARC Council of Ministers at their meeting in Colombo on 8-9 July, 1992. The IGG will hold its next meeting early to draft an agreement on a Preferencial Trade Arrangements in the SAARC Region.

Postponement of talks for Asiasat Transponder

*132. SHRI MURLIDHAR CHANDRAKANT BHANDARE:
SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that talks with the Hongkong firm, Hutchinson Whampoa, for leasing a transponder on Asiasat I satellite scheduled to be held in May this year, were indefinitely postponed at a short notice;

(b) if so, under what circumstances and whether Government sees Pakistan's hand behind the postponement as reported in the 'Hindustan Times' dated 28th May, 1992; and

(c) what steps are being taken by Government to secure the transponder facility?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (KUMARI GIRIJA VYAS): (a) to (c) The proposed visit of a delegation to Hong Kong in May, 1992 to explore the possibility of obtaining a transponder on